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TILLMAN AS SPOKESMAN.

The decision of the interstate commerce committee to have Senator Tillman make its report to the senate on the Heyburn railroad rate bill is one of the remarkable incidents of the session. Tillman is not only prominent in the Democratic ranks, but he is a radical of radicals and a pet aversion of those Republican senators who dislike plain speech.

Although the report of the committee proceedings does not go into details, it is evident the Republicans are so divided in opinions and so hostile in feeling that it was impossible for them to agree either on the report itself or on the man who should present it. The result is the extraordinary spectacle of a Roosevelt measure, taken bodily from the Democratic national platform, presented to the senate by a Democrat and opposed by some of the most influential members of the president's own party.

The one point of difference that split the Republicans is the question whether the law should provide for the immediate enforcement of a rate promulgated by the interstate commerce commission, or whether a rate in controversy should be upheld by the courts before it becomes effective. The committee failed to agree, so it was finally decided to report the Hepburn bill as it came from the house, with the understanding that members of the committee should be free to present amendments in the senate.

Mr. Aldrich proposed that Senator Elkins should make the report. Senator Dolliver, one of the administration spokesmen, protested against having the bill reported by Elkins because he is known to be hostile to the bill. On the final vote Tillman was chosen by the vote of Aldrich, Kean, Foraker, Crane and McLaurin, four Republicans and one Democrat. Elkins, Clapp and Newland voted for Dolliver.

President Roosevelt has had some bitter doses administered by his own party, but none that could be more distasteful to him than this. It exposes the division in party ranks, identifies his pet measure as Democratic doctrine, and places him under obligation to the opposition such as must gall him bitterly.

Senator Aldrich, who is chiefly responsible, has long been known as one of the strongest leaders in the senate, and this departure marks the beginning of an open fight against the president which has long been expected. If any rate legislation is accomplished it will be due to Democratic influence and votes; and if it is defeated or is unsatisfactory, the country will place the responsibility with the Republicans like Aldrich.

ROOSEVELT'S FUTURE.

Discussing the various propositions to take care of President Roosevelt after his present term expires, William E. Curtis says he knows exactly what the president wants. Jake Riis has offered him his choice between another term as president or the mayoralty of Greater New York. Another man would have him, and all ex-presidents, made a senator for life. And that comes nearer the president's ambition, according to Curtis. The correspondent goes on:

> The president makes no secret of his ambition to come to the senate from the state of New York. He talks about it freely, and anyone who has doubts on the subject has only to call at the White House and introduce that topic of conversation. Mr. Roosevelt will tell him frankly that he intends to hunt and travel for a year or so and then resume his active interest in politics and make the senate if possible. He declares frankly that his ambition lies there, and that he hopes to realize it.

John Quincy Adams went back to the house of representatives after serving as president, and Andrew Johnson, though he was never elected to the presidency, served out the unexpired term of Abraham Lincoln and later went back to the senate that had so nearly removed him from the higher office by impeachment proceedings. These are, we believe, the only instances in which ex-presidents have entered the political arena except as candidates for the presidency.

The country expects some measure of lofty dignity from its ex-presidents. Mr. Roosevelt might not mind engaging in a rough scramble for a New York senatorship, but to a great majority of the American public the spectacle would be most unpleasing. He is to have an opportunity, the story goes, to become president of Harvard—a life and a career that should suit one of his sermonizing proclivities. Then when he longs for the strenuous he can get out and play football with the boys.

That would be much better than entering actively into partisan politics. The notion of making life senators out of our ex-presidents is not such a bad one, for if a man is good enough to be president he certainly ought to be a first-class senator. Thus the nation would always have the active participation of its strongest and best, and there would hardly be enough of them to make a great political difference.

STOPPING CRIME VIEWS.

The board of public safety of Louisville, Ky., has issued an order directing the discontinuance in the vaudeville and other houses of entertainment of moving pictures showing "scenes of crime, methods of criminals, improper pictures and scenes suggestive of crime and evil, all of which tend to appeal to the weak, or vicious minded." The chief of police has been instructed to see that the order is obeyed.

Unquestionably such pictures have a bad influence. Too many of them are placed on view. There are lifelike illustrations of how to wreck a train, how to stab a victim with a stiletto, and to kill officers who are sent in pursuit of the criminal, how to set fire to a house and abduct a child, how to commit burglary, highway robbery, and a host of other offenses. Impressionable boys, especially if they have the least criminal instincts, cannot view pictures of this character without being harmed.

Everybody has seen them, and nearly everybody will testify that the sympathy of the audience is almost invariably and almost unanimously in favor of the criminal. There is applause when he temporarily evades his pursuers, and there is no manifestation of joy when he is finally run down and captured or killed, according as the picture has been "faked."

It is surely not necessary, in order to entertain the public, to throw crime pictures on a screen. There are so many subjects for pictures, so many that teach a good lesson instead of a bad one, so many that appeal to the sense of the beautiful. And yet fully three out of five of the moving pictures one sees are pictures of crime and criminals. It is high time the displays were stopped. They have no place in any proper amusement enterprise.

Boys will leap badness easily enough, in all conscience, without having it taught to them in places where they should only be educated in better things. If there is no local ordinance covering the subject, and if the "American" council can spare the time from the salary-raising and conduit-grabbing industry, it might pass such a law.

SHOULD EXERCISE DISCRETION.

The curious operation of the federal statutes covering contests for seats in the house of representatives is emphasized by a case that comes up from Georgia. A negro, his name is unimportant, was a candidate for congress on the republican ticket four years ago. He got less than 200 votes, but he instituted a contest. While it was pending he had the privileges of the floor and when, in the course of events, his contest was dismissed, he got the customary $2000 allowance.

This encouraged the negro to run for congress again. In 1904 he was again a candidate. This time his total vote was a little more than 200. Again he instituted contest proceedings. Again, of course, he will be denied a seat, but just as surely he will draw his $2000 allowance. This notwithstanding the fact that he has just been taken back from Washington to Georgia to serve a sentence for theft. Isn't there something foolish about the law? Should it not be termed "An act to encourage the filing of contest proceedings?"

There should be some way of denying contestants, in cases of this character, any sum of money for expenses. They have no shadow of right to the money. If it were not for the prospect of being abundantly rewarded many contests would never be filed. Congress should exercise some discretion in these matters. There are times when it is proper to allow money for expenses. The case of the negro is not one of them.

It appears that the more the "American" councilmen hear from experts about the Big Cottonwood conduit grab the harder time they are going to have making the taxpayers believe the grab is in their interest, and not in the interest of a few individuals.

Richard Mansfield has announced that he will retire from the stage after three more seasons. And doubtless Mr. Mansfield is of the opinion that his retirement will work an irreparable injury to the stage.

Senator Burrows continues to be in a hurry to wind up the Smoot case. Yet the fact that the case has been dragged out this far may properly be charged to Senator Burrows, and to nobody else.

The Western Pacific Railway company wants 10,000 laborers at $2 a day and up. Is there any excuse for idle men with that prospect in view?

As a sample of fine weather, yesterday was pretty nearly all right. If the weather man is wise he will bring on a lot more like it.

There Are Plays and—Plays

BY FRANKLIN FYLES.

New York, Feb. 23.—Winston Churchill and Rupert Hughes are among the few who know that the plays they write will be acted if they say so, for they are rich enough to pay the costs of productions. If that were not so, "The Title Mart" and "The Triangle" would not be on the New York stage this week. They were rejected long ago by the theatrical trust managers, to whom an offer of capitalization did not appeal, as they had a plenty of that. But the development of an opposition syndicate has opened up practicable ways to authors with the monetary means to make independent experiments.

Churchill has had several of his novels dramatized by other hands than his own, and none of the results has been good; so he undertook stagecraft all by himself, and "The Title Mart" is what he has to show for it. His publishers printed and bound an edition of it, but he held it back from the book market till after it should be put on sale in the theatres. However, in the book it has the form of a play with dialogues and "business" only, but no narrative, although the characters and their movements are described sufficiently to render them comprehensible to lay readers. That is the method followed by the literary malingerer, George Bernard Shaw, so as to make his idiosyncrasies intelligible; so did that man of real mental malady, Oscar Wilde; so does A. W. Pinero, although in his case the sole purpose is to instruct actors and their stage directors how to treat the matter.

Let me digress for a paragraph about Shaw's latest experience with American exasperation. Englishmen have never taken him into theatrical consideration; no play of his has been performed in a regular way in London; but two have been accepted in this country and two have been rejected, leaving "Cashel Byron's Profession" to break the tie, with Jim Corbett for its pugilist and Augustin Daly's hallowed stage for the place of the knockout. Our fashionable folk wouldn't have it for a stunt in amusements. It was shifted to a theatre where it would get a chance at the multitude, and there it fared no better. Now it is at a stock house, with Corbett and the scenery, but the local company doing all of the acting—unless I am to admit that Corbett acts some.

"This thing is like meeting different fighters in a succession of contests," he is reported to me as saying. "The first heroine I had to face was Miss Margaret Wycherly, the Shakespearean actress, and I had no more than got onto her points than they put me up against Miss Amelia Bingham, with a starring reputation, to shake my nerve. This week I put up my hands with Miss Beatrice Morgan, with a society-to-stage record. What next? Oh, I guess I'll go down and out, for the play's no good, whether I am or not."

Maybe that other pug-mummer, Bob Fitzsimmons, is doing a little bit of neat acting, and maybe he is not; it all depends on facts not in my possession. Bob and Mrs. Bob are in vaudeville together after their newsy separation; and who can tell that his charge that she eloped with another man after his last losing fight, her retreat to Dakota with divorcal declarations, and his reconciliatory pursuit of her, were not tricks to advertise the present tour? It is a possibility that they are still estranged matrimonially and are reunited for stage purposes only. That idea is suggested by what they do at the end of their sketch. They are using the courtship scene and the punch-bag exhibition from "A Fight for Life," their drama of last season; and again he is clumsy at the wooing and deft at the punching. In the full-length play his love-making has a kiss and embrace for a climax. In the sketch the lank, hulking fellow starts to hug the pretty, slender young woman, but she draws back with a show of resentment; and when in a moment the curtain is lifted, they behave as if he were miffed and she mussed by his attempt to kiss her. If it is not make-believe, then it is good acting; and, as repeated with variations every afternoon and evening, it is interesting anyway.

Now we will climb back for a few lines, if you please, from the level of Corbett and Fitzsimmons to that of Churchill and Hughes. The themes of "The Title Mart" and "The Triangle" are as time-worn, though not yet worn out, as money in matrimony. Churchill's girl is an American heiress whose socially aspiring stepmother registers her in the English marriage exchange to swap for an impoverished duke. Hughes' girl is poor, and she goes in for a rich husband; but, having got one, the sweetheart whom she has discarded inherits vast wealth and tries to buy her release. I cannot tell in this letter what there is of account in these two plays, because they have been postponed until too late in the week.

That was why I went to Harlem to see a new melodrama from the west, no new matter being presented Monday evening nearer the center of the town; and plays of western life have come into fresh vogue with us; so the scene of excitement promised in this one might prove readable. The advertisements said that a realistic railway train would be seen to wind its way around the Georgetown loop, that marvel of Colorado mountain railroading, and be held up by a stage band of robbers so faithful to fact that, on starting for the theatre, I felt an impulse to take along no more money than car fare, leave my watch at home and keep ready to throw up my hands quick.

"The nearer a stage character gets to his home the smaller his value becomes," William H. Crane once said to me. "The senator whom I personated in 'The Senator' was well known to be Senator Plumb of Kansas, and in Washington the likeness was a source of popularity ;but when I went to Plumb's own state the play wasn't liked much. I had a similar experience with 'The Governor of Kentucky.' Its governor was not a copy of anyone, but his surroundings in the play were precisely correct. Why, I made a visit to Frankfort with the author, manager, stage director and scenic artists. We photographed the governor's office in the capitol, and parlor in his residence; we got from the amiable wife and daughter of Governor Brown minute directions how to reproduce the manners and customs of a governor's open-to-all reception; and during half a season on Broadway the piece thrived immensely; but prosperity waned at Cincinnati, ceased at Louisville, and didn't revive until we got away from Kentucky."

Crane's words were recalled when I saw "Behind the Mask," and I wondered whether a Denver audience would take it as a joke to laugh at, or an insult to throw things at. For what the author, Edmund Day, had meant to be big came out small. The whole of Georgetown valley was painted on a thirty-foot canvas at the back; the limited express streaked its pinhead lights around the loop; it was no bigger than tin toys when it jerked and joggled itself across a near viaduct that a boy might have erected with building blocks; and finally, when it was stopped by the bandits in the foreground, its noisy approach was followed by the sight of no more than the tip end of the locomotive obtruded at one side. Harlem was indifferent, but Denver might be resentful.

A trip of little more than suburban length took me to see "Lincoln," a drama which, I fancy, the people of Washington, Kentucky or Illinois will not resent as belittling their great citizen. The making of it was an unusual process. Benjamin Chapin was on the lyceum platform with delineations of Lincoln. His face and physique enabled him to produce a striking likeness of the war president, whose wit and humor, statesmanship and patriotism, were illustrated by characterization in anecdotes. Chapin soon made up his mind to expand his monologue into a play. The job might have been done in a year by the ordinary method, and probably quite as well as by spending ten years at it. However, he was getting a living with his church entertainment while he wrote and rewrote enough matter for a dozen dramas, trying it bit by bit on his audiences, retaining and rejecting, and so laboriously putting together a single play while Fitch and Thomas have brought out thirty-seven.

Lincoln, in "Lincoln," is all the time in the White House, except for one call at the war department. We see him first as he gets the news of the firing on Fort Sumter, and last as he starts for the theatre to be killed; and between those two ends of the play he is shown to us while the final fighting of the war is going on at Gettysburg. He has domestic scenes of good humor with Mrs. Lincoln and Tad; he lays a kindly hand on the tangled love affairs of two young friends; he has serio-comic contentions with the testy Stanton and the bellicose Hooker; and at momentous junctures he shows himself a political and even military master. The mentioned historic persons are the principals in a most sympathetic and respectful Lincoln drama, shrewdly calculated to lead church folk to the theatre, and also satisfactory to people with the theatrical habit. But wasn't that an anxious first night for Chapin, who couldn't know that his ten years of labor wouldn't end in one evening of futility.

One scene may set old-timers to delving into the annals of Lincoln when this drama gets to Washington. Stanton's irascibility and the president's patience with it are set forth when General Hooker, having been put under arrest by the secretary for insubordination, goes to quarrel with the head of the war department. There is an altercation that almost comes to blows, for the men hate each other intensely, while Lincoln, who believes in the sincerity and value of both, quietly contrives by droll trickery to turn them into friends. Nowhere in the play is Chapin's Lincoln grandiloquent or statuesque; he is the human Lincoln of awkward mannerisms and disregard of polite usages; always a joker, yet never lacking in an uncouth force and dignity.

The climax is an example of dramatic effect wrought without stage device. Lincoln is said by historians to have had a dream in which he saw himself lying a corpse in state. In the play he tells of it to Stanton and Hooker as having been dreampt the night before, and now he is dressing himself to go to the fateful performance of "Our American Cousin." While clumsily and protestingly completing the toilet which Mrs. Lincoln has insisted on, he gives a simply and offhand, yet graphic and thrilling account of his vision. Mrs. Lincoln begs him to stay at home. Stanton advises him that plots against his life are real and numerous. But he is not superstitious and he decides to go. The audience knows every detail of the tragedy that stopped the comedy at Ford's. No attempt to reproduce it in make-believe would send an assemblage home impressed half so deeply as to have finally seen Lincoln quietly put on his old cloak and unbrushed hat and stalk out of the room on his way to his death.

To Yvette Guilbert from Benjamin Chapin is the widest possible contrast in dramatic art. But the first question to answer as to Yvette's reappearance this week is, how does she look now? Did you see her in 1894? She was then the soul and body of Parisian deviltry in exquisitely wicked exhibitions. At the age of 35 she was the ideal, not the real, siren of the boulevardes; for where all the other ballad actresses of the concert halls were no more than imitations of their own pictures on the billboards, she was as wispy-waspy, and especially as naked, as the most fantastical of the creatures made by the poster artists.

Yvette at that period had hardly any flesh between her skin and her bones, yet the smoothness of the surface gave no signs of the skeleton just underneath. That physical peculiarity made it feasible to cut her corsage down almost to the belt line before as well as behind. Long black gloves and narrow shoulder straps were practically all she wore, except her hair, above where her hips would have been if she had had any hips worth mentioning. When she lifted up her arms, the front and rear sections of nudity were seen to be joined by bare side sections. But we were, generally, not ashamed to look at her, for she didn't seem to be an actual woman, but a fictitious caricature of French recklessness.

A dozen years have passed with Yvette, ah, me! and now the annual layers of tissue amount to a considerable separation of her cuticle from her bones, making her a rather plump matron. No more does she care or dare to denude herself as she used to. But she still is a resourceful artist. She gives a concert of French risky songs of two bygone periods. For the first lot, she wears a costume copied from Mme. Pompadour and another from Mme. DuBarry—king's harlots both, don't you see; suggestive under cover of the wickedness which formerly she disclosed freely. For the second section of the show, while singing songs of what she calls the crinoline period, she looks as funny as our war-time belles do in old pictures. Do you recall Mrs. Lincoln's inauguration ball gown, with its prodigious distension of skirt? Yvette in that sort of a costume is a quaintly comic object, and quite respectable, for she is enclosed well up towards the neck.

Seriously considered, Yvette Guilbert is finely representative of French dramatic art, especially of its method that makes pantomime quite the equal of elocution in acting—a method practiced by the two graduates of the Theatre Francaise with whom we are familiar, Bernhardt and Coquelin, as markedly as by this chanteuse from the boulevardes, if not as profusely. That is opposed to the English and American way of putting the language foremost and letting the gesticulation follow on. If you were to glue a French actor's face so that he couldn't grimace, fasten his shoulders down so that he couldn't shrug, and bind his arms so that he couldn't fling them, probably he would not be able to say "Boo." Yvette is worth studying for her phenomena in pantomime.

The initial ballad in her programme, for a fair illustration of my meaning, has six verses to tell that a rustic girl lets a fellow kiss her, confesses it to the parish priest, is advised by him to make an expiatory pilgrimage to a virgin shrine, replies that she will do so gladly if the kissing chap may go along, and finally, for her contumacy, is penanced by the priest to stay and kiss him every day for a month. The words indicate nothing worse than roguish kisses. But to a listener who knows no French, and watches Yvette's action, the maiden looks like the most artful of coquettes to begin with, the most ardent of kissers to go on with, and finally the most passionate of sinners. That is the French method of illustrative pantomime carried to excess.

IDENTITY OF HUCK FINN.

Mark Twain Says Captain Tonkray Was Not Original of Character.

(New York Tribune.)

Who is Huck Finn?

From out of the west there came the other day a report that he had passed from this life in the person of Captain A. O. Tonkray, who died at Murray, Ida., from heart failure.

But Tom Sawyer, alias Mark Twain, alias Samuel L. Clemens, the one man who really knows who Huck Finn is, says that the hero of his interesting book is not dead, that he is now a respected magistrate in a far western state, but he refuses to divulge his real name. The report from the west, which comes in the form of a press dispatch from Wallace, Ida., said in substance that Captain Tonkray, whose death occurred at Murray, had been a playmate of Mr. Clemens' in his boyhood days and that he was the original of Huck Finn, the happy-go-lucky, daredevil character whose adventures did so much to keep Tom Sawyer in hot water and to make the pages of the book in which they both figure such interesting reading.

When Mark Twain, otherwise Samuel L. Clemens, and by many believed to be the Tom Sawyer of the interesting story of which he is the author, was shown this report at his Fifth avenue home, in this city, he denied that he had ever known Captain Tonkray, and said that he was not the original of the character in the book. Asked to tell just who Huck Finn is, Mr. Clemens sent to the editor of the Tribune this note:

"21 Fifth Avenue, Feb. 15, 1906.

"Dear Sir—I believe that the original of Huck Finn is still alive. He is a magistrate in a far western state, and is a respected and respect-worthy man. I do not consider myself privileged to reveal his name. Truly yours,

"S. L. CLEMENS."

In the preface to "The Adventures of Tom Sawyer," Mr. Clemens wrote: "Most of the adventures recorded in this book really occurred; one or two were experiences of my own, the rest those of boys who were schoolmates of mine. Huck Finn is drawn from life; Tom Sawyer also, but not from an individual; he is a combination of the characteristics of three boys whom I knew, and therefore belongs to the composite order of architecture."

The same characters also appear in the later volume "Huckleberry Finn."

Since then the world has been guessing who Huck Finn is, and thus far with poor results. From time to time reports have been circulated that this or that man was the original of the character, but both Tom Sawyer and Huck Finn have maintained a silence as complete and effective as if they had formed a compact like that described in "Tom Sawyer," when, after witnessing the murder in the graveyard at night, they signed a pact, written on a shingle in blood pricked from Tom's finger, and reading in this wise: "Huck Finn and Tom Sawyer swears they will keep mum about this and they wish they may Drop down dead in their Tracks if they ever tell and Rot."

Now, why should that worthy western magistrate who really was Huck persist in living an obscure life when he might win world-wide notoriety and get his picture in the Sunday paper by revealing his identity? Speak up, Huck! Hundreds of thousands of warm friends, as yet unknown to you, are waiting to welcome you.